



Doug and Donna  
**STAMPER**  
Your Missionaries In  
**KENYA**



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Dear Friends,

### **THE CRAZY WOMAN AND THE DISCOUNT CORN**

In January, I went with a pastor to meet the people at Karaba. They had experienced a difficulty between the pastor, the chairman (head deacon), and the members. We mediated the discussion and learned several good pointers on how to love your people. I discovered that the people had a good case against their pastor, as he had openly rebuked a woman in the congregation for being undisciplined (she led the ladies fellowship, who had purchased some kitchen items for the church, and had brought those things into the service and asked the 'head deacon' to pray and ask God's blessings on the utensils), even calling her a 'mwende wazimu' (crazy woman) to her face in our meeting. Then it was revealed that the pastor and the head deacon had conspired together to misappropriate church funds and report only 10% of the sale price of the church harvest (about 1 acre of maize that the church members had planted and that had produced very well, with a market value of more than \$250) to the Treasurer for inclusion into the church financial records. I agreed to meet with the church elders – the pastor and the 'chairman' - and sort out the situation, but they chose to leave and go to the Southern Baptist Church instead. They were voted in on their 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday there to be deacons in the other church (their families joining that church more than doubled their attendance, as they had only 5 members). Well, the work of God goes on at Karaba, and the members are so happy to be free from those 2 men and their sinful ways. Pray for them as they seek a new pastor, hopefully one that will do right and love God at any cost. And pray for us that we might not be deceived by "crazy men".

### **THE TAX MAN FOUND US**

When we first arrived in Kenya in 1992, there were talks going on about the tax issue here in Kenya. We listened, did what we were recommended to do, and went on in our service to the Lord. In 1994, then again in 1998, the matter came up again, and we continued to take the recommended steps. We had an active application with the Kenya Revenue Authority asking for individual Missionary Tax Exemption, and were assured that it had been received. That was what we were instructed to do by a well-known tax attorney, and we believed that his advice was correct, and we still do believe that that advice was right. But everything changed in 2003.

With a new reading of the existing tax code, and with the current parliament being pressured to step up their revenue collections so that they might pay their external debts, we have now become the target of that need for big money. All Missionary Tax Exemptions have been cancelled, and the 'tax man' is actively looking for **MORE** money. There is a lot of room for

interpretation in the law, and a lot of bribery going on, and both of these things are fast at work. The code states that taxes are due, at a rate of nearly 30%, on all money used to get us here, keep us here, and get us out again. That includes air tickets, vehicle costs, salary, housing and utilities, schooling, and possibly even our US Income Tax, Social Security payments, retirement, and our health insurance that are all paid in the US on our behalf.

We formed a committee here to look into these issues, and have taken several steps to try and solve this issue, including meeting with the Vice President, the Minister of Finance, the head of the Kenya Revenue Authority, several Members of Parliament, and even the US Ambassador. The U.S. State Department, the Washington Times, and the local press have all been informed, but to no avail up to this time. We have not been sitting back, but actively trying to find a resolution to this problem. We now accept that we must pay.

Now, the code is in need of interpretation, but there are basically 2 thoughts about what we owe. The problem is that we do not have the money to pay those taxes (If we pay the lesser amount - that which is reported on my 1099, it comes to about \$600 per month; or if we take the amount that several other missionaries have determined to be the requested amount - that which we have been told we are liable for, it is almost \$1500 per month). We believe that there are those who are sidestepping the law by either hiding from the Kenya Revenue Authority or paying a 'token' payment. We cannot do that with a clear conscience, and thus we accept that we must pay, or be in violation of Christ's instruction about paying tribute (taxes) in Matthew 22:17; 21 which says "... *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? ... Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*"

After talking with our pastor, David Perdue, and seeking counsel from others, we believe that we should return to the States and commence trying to raise that additional support. In our case we will look to raise \$750 a month additional support, which will increase our abilities to serve God here in Thika. If the amount is definitely established on the higher schedule, then we will take another look at that time. We do believe that the budget hearings in June might be pivotal, with the new laws going into effect in January 2006. But till that happens, we are to be responsible. We cannot afford to pay, thus we should leave for now or be in violation of the Tax Codes of Kenya. *We will return when we can pay the required taxes.*

Please pray for us as we return to the States to raise our support level, and for the work that we must again leave behind. It is never a good time to leave, but we know and believe that God's timing is perfect. Romans 8:28 reminds us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." We also will not forget his promise in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

For Souls in Kenya,

*Doug and Donna*

**"STAMPing the Message of Jesus Christ into the Hearts of Kenya"**

Sent out by: First Baptist Church 6062 Old Shawnee Rd. Milford, DE 19963

Baptist Bible Fellowship International PO Box 191 Springfield, MO 65801

E-Mail: [dougstamper@bbfi.org](mailto:dougstamper@bbfi.org) World Wide Web: [www.bbfimissions.com](http://www.bbfimissions.com)